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4 March 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

1. The passing of Stalin will remove an autocrat who, while ruthless and determined to spread Soviet power, was not reckless. Furthermore, he was acutely conscious both of the necessity to provide a strong industrial base for military power, and of the existence of such a base in the US. Finally, he was able to impose his caution on all agents of the USSR.

2. It would be unsafe to assume that Stalin's successors will have his caution, his respect for the power potential of the US, or his control over all agents of the USSR.

3. Probably there will be no immediate external evidence either of dissension within the ruling group in the USSR or of a shift in Soviet foreign policy.

4. Nevertheless, in the course of the next few months there may be a struggle for power within the Soviet hierarchy and/or a shift of Soviet foreign policy which might result in reckless courses of action.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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